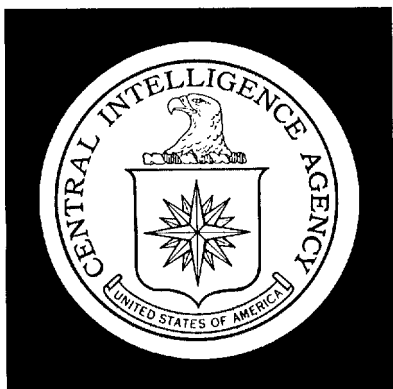


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Cambodia: (The government shows no sign of backing off in its continuing struggle with Chief of State Sihanouk.)

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(resentment is rising over Sihanouk's refusal to allow the government to run its affairs. Some cabinet ministers have even discussed the possibility of taking extraconstitutional measures to ensure the government's independence. Although similar sentiments have been voiced in the past, Sihanouk's opposition appears to be more determined and united than ever before.)

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(Acting prime minister Matak, who has spearheaded the cabinet's drive to break Sihanouk's hold on the day-to-day conduct of the nation's affairs, has voiced confidence that the government has enough support to weather any attempt by Sihanouk to unseat it. Matak's optimism may be based in part on the support that he has gained in the National Assembly, the legislative body that constitutionally wields ultimate power over the cabinet's tenure. In the past, Sihanouk has used the Assembly to rubber stamp decisions he had made on the composition of the government and other matters.)

(Although the determination of these opposition elements may falter if the Prince turns on the heat, at this juncture the dispute is shaping up as the most serious challenge to Sihanouk's authority in a decade. It is in the interests of both sides to avoid a showdown, but loose talk about the use of force against Sihanouk is a clear sign that events could get out of hand. An added element of uncertainty is the continuing absence on medical leave of Prime Minister Lon Nol, who heretofore has been a calming influence in the dispute.)

(The next major move could come next month when Sihanouk presides over a meeting of the National Congress, a semiannual public forum he has used in past years to help push through unpopular or controversial measures.)

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Venezuela: Growing discontent within the military may cause more difficulties for the Caldera government.

The administration's indifference toward the military and reports that leaders of the ruling Christian Democratic Party want to reduce the pay of the officers and civilian employees are the basic causes of military dissatisfaction. Moreover, the administration's restraints against counter-guerrilla operations have not been popular.

There is unrest among junior as well as senior officers.

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Coup plotting is generally discounted at this time, but the situation could deteriorate if the government does not soon reach a rapprochement with the military.

The level of discontent is closely related to the continuing student protest movement. Military occupation of the Central University in Caracas four weeks ago evoked favorable response from the public and helped boost morale for the moment. A further test may come when the troops leave the campus.

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West Germany: [Bonn has decided to sign the nonproliferation treaty without further delay, according to the West German Disarmament Commissioner. [During a stormy Bundestag debate yesterday, the government turned aside opposition Christian Democratic demands for additional talks to clarify certain questions regarding the treaty.] This clears the way for a final cabinet go ahead and formal signature today. The decision to act promptly appears to be motivated by a desire on the part of Chancellor Brandt to attend the upcoming European Community summit and the NATO ministerial meetings with German signature an accomplished fact. Another important consideration is the favorable impact that German adherence is expected to have on Bonn's Eastern policy.]

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